



**Walsall Bereavement
Support Service**

Reg. Charity No. 1152724

Walsall Bereavement Support Service

Annual Report 2020-2021



**Helping local people to cope with
the impact of bereavement and loss**

Trustees' Annual Report

And Financial Statements

1st April 2020 - 31st March 2021

Contents

Report of the Trustees	Pages 3 - 19
Reference and Administrative Information	Page 20
Acknowledgements	Page 21
Report of the Independent Examiner	Page 22
Statement of Financial Activities	Page 23
Balance Sheet	Page 24
Principle Accounting Policies	Pages 25 - 26
Notes to the Financial Statements	Pages 27 - 33

Report of the Trustees

The Trustees of Walsall Bereavement Support Service (WBSS) have pleasure in presenting their annual report and financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31st March 2021.

The financial statements comply with the Charities Act, the Charity's Constitution and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) (updated 1 January 2019).

Chair's Report

Well, what a year we have all had!

Despite the upheaval of national restrictions resulting in our staff and volunteers having to work remotely from home, during this period we have continued to support 332 bereaved adults and children/young people who felt unable to cope with their grief and its impact on their lives. Referrals to both our adult and children/young people's support services did reduce because of school closures and businesses, medical, and community organisations reducing or closing their services. At the time of writing my report we are now well on our way to restrictions being lifted and as the country returns to new type of normality we anticipate that our referrals this coming year will increase rapidly. We know that people bereaved over the past year have had to endure the pain of being unable to be with their loved ones when they have died, find comfort from friends or families living in different households, or hold the funerals they would have chosen to have. Historically, we have found that most people who find it difficult to manage their grief seek support within the first 2 years following their bereavement. The impact of the pandemic on the bereaved, irrespective of how their loved one died, will become clear as we work through 2021.



When national restrictions came into place in March last year, the trustees decided that all staff and volunteers should work from home until it was safe to return to our counselling offices. A grant enabled us to update staff laptops and telephones to make this transition as smooth as possible and ensure continuity of support for our service users. We also introduced a new digital policy and staff were able to train to offer remote counselling via Zoom. Thankfully, by September 2020, we were able to reopen our offices in a phased return and we continue to ensure that all procedures are in place to protect everyone.

Over the past few years, we had been working towards developing our community fundraising income and had welcomed the support of local people raising money to help fund the delivery of our services. Unfortunately, national restrictions prevented any of our plans from going ahead and we have been more reliant on grants and donations from trusts and foundations this year. We are very grateful for the continued support of the National Lottery Community Fund who fund our adult service '*Let's Talk*' and for their additional support over the past year through their COVID-19 Emergency Fund. Their grant enabled us to purchase vital PPE to ensure that our offices were safe for staff, volunteers, and service users to return, helped with our running costs, and enabled us to launch our new outreach project to support local people affected by bereavement who were feeling isolated and in need of someone to talk to.

We are also very grateful to the Henry Smith Charity and Children in Need for their continued support for our children, young people, and family project *THE SWING*, and to the many other grant makers who have helped us.

Some of these funders have supported WBSS for many years including the Eveson Charitable Trust, the Grantham Yorke Trust, and the Turner Trust and we are extremely grateful for their commitment to our work. As a small local charity, every donation makes a huge difference to what we are able to deliver.

In our report last year, we were able to introduce our new Head of Service, Rhiannon Brown. Unfortunately, due to ill health, Rhiannon sadly had to resign later in the year. At this time the country was going into its second lockdown, so the trustees chose to put an interim structure in place to manage the charity. Bev Richardson, WBSS Finance Manager and children's counsellor, stepped up to take responsibility for running the charity. Bev had been working for WBSS for 15 years and had a firm understanding of the operational needs of the organisation and the support needs of its service users. This smooth transition ensured there was no disruption to any of the services that we provide. In March 2021, we advertised for a new Head of Service, and we were pleased that Bev decided to apply for this position and was successful in her application.

Finally, I would like to thank WBSS team of staff and volunteers for their dedication and hard work over the past 12 months. Our volunteers are integral to our service delivery, especially to our adult bereavement support service because they provide over 96% of the adult counselling support. The quality of this support is outstanding because our volunteers are already training to become qualified counsellors and in addition, they receive specialist bereavement training from WBSS. Many of our volunteers continue to provide support for many years, even after they are fully qualified.

I look forward to the year ahead and no doubt a few more challenges, but we are determined to ensure that everyone who needs our support will be cared for.

Jim Green

Charitable Objectives



provide caring and sensitive support that is free, confidential, and open to all residents of Walsall, irrespective of their relationship to the deceased, the cause of death, or the time that has elapsed since the death.



reduce the potential negative long-term impact that bereavement can have on a person's physical/mental wellbeing, education or employment, by providing appropriate support to enable each person to cope with their loss and begin to rebuild their lives.



prevent the effects of bereavement from damaging family cohesion through developing understanding and improving communication within the family unit.

The trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in Chapter 1 Section 4 of the Charities Act 2011 to have regard to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit 'Charities and Public Benefit'. In the opinion of the trustees, the objectives of the charity as detailed on the previous page are for the public benefit.

The support offered by Walsall Bereavement Support Service is currently available free of charge to bereaved children, young people, and their families who live within the Walsall borough or those registered at a Walsall GP surgery or educated within a Walsall school. Support is offered irrespective of the relationship to the deceased, the cause of death, or the length of time that has elapsed since the death.

Our Strategic Aims



To establish WBSS as the main local provider in the field of emotional bereavement support



To raise awareness about the impact that bereavement has on a person's emotional and physical health and where and when to seek support and advice



To provide and promote high quality support services to the bereaved in the borough of Walsall



To raise awareness amongst the general public about 'Dying Matters' to help reduce the negative stigma that is attached to death and dying



Our Service

During the year, WBSS helped 186 bereaved adults and 146 bereaved children, young people, and their families. In total, 1,351 hours of support was provided to the bereaved.

Our support is provided through 3 projects:

'Let's Talk' Bereavement support for adults

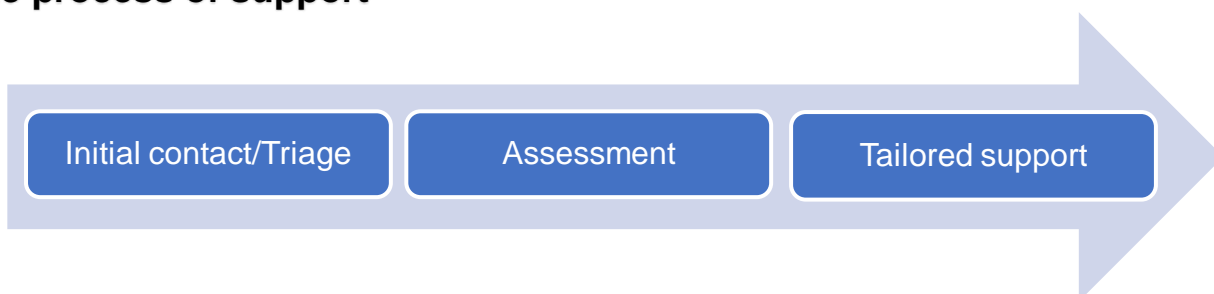
HOPE GROUP Specialist support for adults bereaved by suicide

THE SWING Bereavement support for children, young people, and families

Our support is tailored to the specific needs of our service users and includes:

- One-to-one face to face, telephone and on-line counselling
- Group Support
- Family and Sibling support
- Out of Hours service week-day evenings and Saturday mornings
- Special Support in schools
- Outreach work in the community

The process of support



Our Services are Open to all people

WBSS wants its projects and services to be open to as wide a range of people as possible and as such, we do not discriminate clients by age, race, gender, sexual orientation, relationship to the bereaved person, the time elapsed since the death, or cause of death.



We utilise the skills of staff and volunteer counsellors from different backgrounds and ethnicities, to ensure that we can provide the most appropriate support to each individual client. We work with schools across the borough, many of whom have high levels of students who have additional support needs such as ADHD, Autism, Asperger's syndrome etc. To help support these potentially challenging students, counsellors have all undergone specific training relating to supporting this client group.

Our Projects

'Let's Talk'

The people who turn to WBSS for support are unable to cope with the overwhelming feelings of grief that they are experiencing and the impact on their mental, physical, and emotional health.

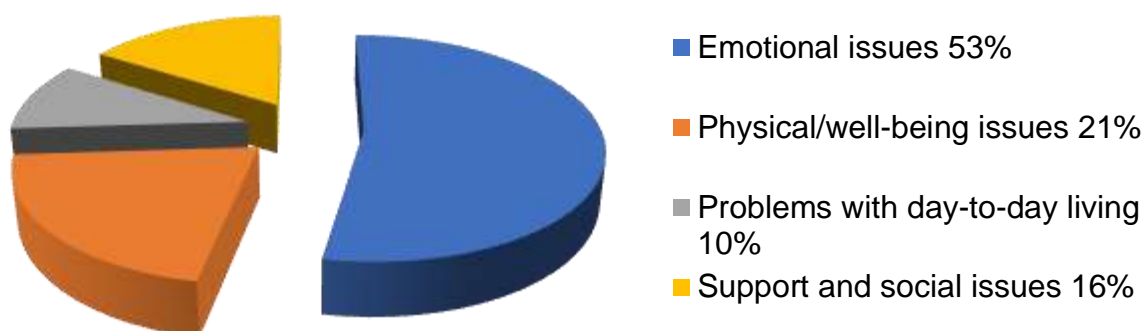
Many of our clients have anxiety, depression, and more complex issues that have developed as a result of how they feel. For adults this can include dependency upon substances such as alcohol, prescription drugs, or cigarettes.

Some are unable to work, have withdrawn from family and social life, and are less able to take care of themselves.



Over the past 12 months 'Let's Talk' received 186 referrals and delivered 697 Hours of Support

Difficulties experienced by adults referred for support



75% of service users had been prescribed medication to help them with the effects of their bereavement

The adults that we helped

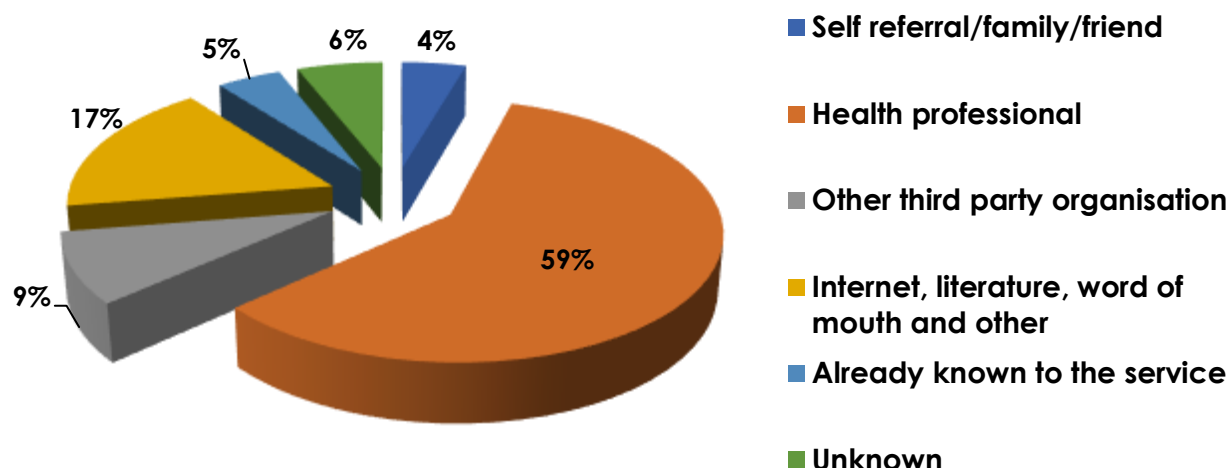
79% sought support within 2 years of bereavement; however, we support people whenever they need our help and during this period **6%** of service users sought our help 5 years or more after their bereavement

77% were of working age (between 20-69 years of age)

72% of referrals who gave their postal addresses lived in areas falling in the top 10% most deprived areas in the UK. A further 16 (9%) lived in areas in the top 25% most deprived areas. In total, 146 (81%) of clients lived in the top 25% most deprived areas of the UK

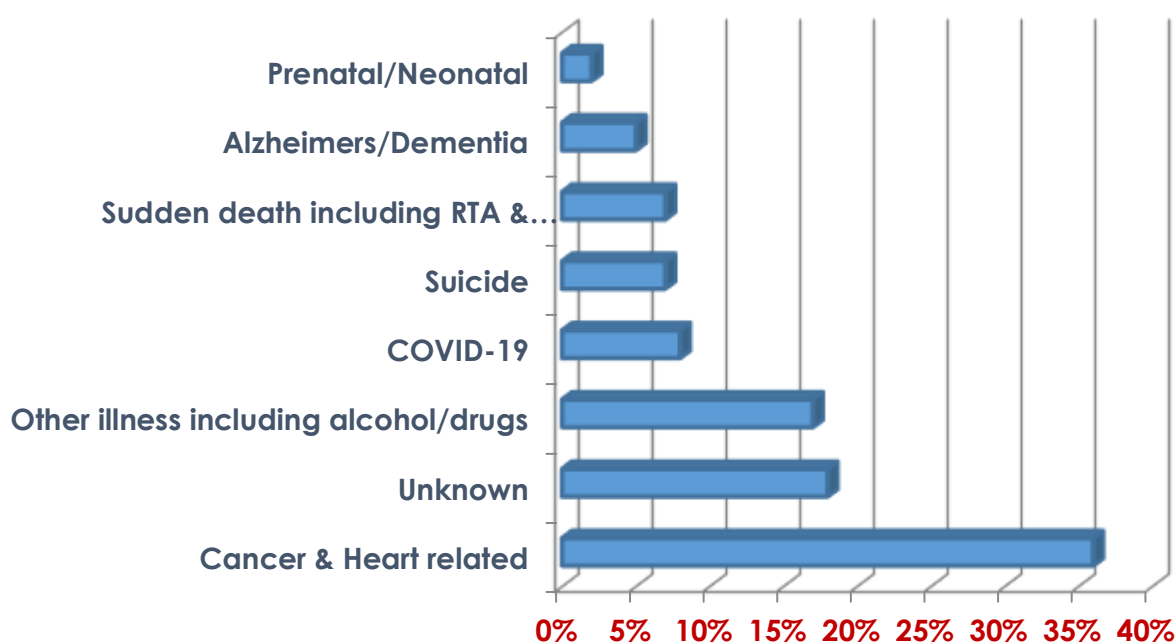
63% of referrals were female, **30%** male, and **7%** unknown

Referral sources



85% of adults seeking support had experienced a significant family death such as a parent, spouse, sibling, grandparent or child

Cause of death



HOPE GROUP

Since early 2000, we have offered a monthly support group specifically for adults bereaved by suicide. Although the group is facilitated by two people connected to WBSS, either volunteers, staff, or group members can lead the meeting. The HOPE Group provides a sympathetic and nurturing environment in which attendees can feel safe to express their thoughts and feelings without fear of being judged.

THE SWING

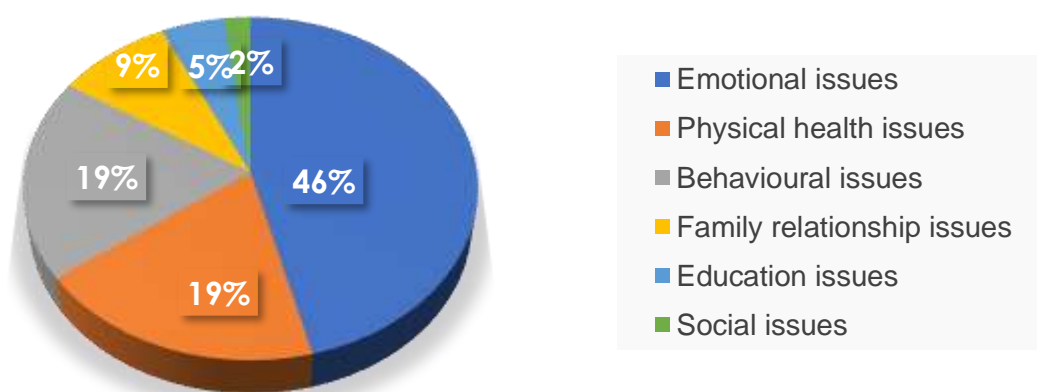
Children/young people referred to our service are struggling to understand or manage their reactions to grief, which can lead to psychological / physiological difficulties.

Without appropriate support, these issues can spiral out of control and in the worst cases, we see service users excluded from school for behavioural issues and family breakdown due to misunderstood grief/poor communication.



Over the past 12 months of the 146 referrals to *THE SWING* and delivered 868 Hours of Support

Difficulties experienced by children and young people referred for support



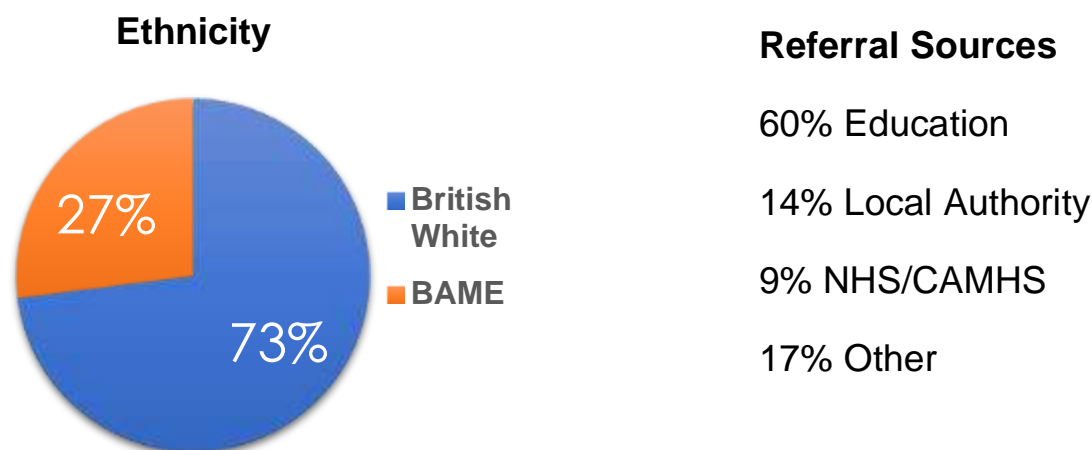
- 73% had experienced a significant family death such as a parent/carer, sibling, or grandparent
- 70% lived in areas falling within the most deprived places to live in the UK (50% within the 10% most deprived places to live)
- 30% had specific support needs (emotional, health, behavioural, learning or diagnosed conditions)
- 18% were defined as having Safeguarding Needs
- 17% had experienced multiple bereavements
- 6% had allocated social workers and 18% had safeguarding needs
- 4% were living in one adult households and 7% in other care

Age Breakdown

47% were 11 years and under
52% were 12-18 years of age
1% were over 18 years of age

Gender Breakdown

51% were male
49% were female



The significance of their bereavement

- 73% were bereaved of a significant immediate family member
- 28% were bereaved of a parent
- 9% were bereaved of a sibling including half/step
- 8% were bereaved of another relative (Aunt, Uncle, Cousin, Niece/Nephew)
- 2% were bereaved of a partner or friend
- 17% were bereaved multiple times

The impact of our work

We understand the importance of monitoring and evaluation because it enables us to hear and respond to the views and experiences of our beneficiaries. The learning that we gain from evaluating our work informs the development of any of our new work streams.

We measure success by evaluating improvements made by each client against the issues affecting them due to their bereavement. At the onset of support, we undertake an assessment and record the issues facing each person via a questionnaire. We then monitor change under four main categories: emotional, behaviour, physical, and social/educational. These are broken down further into specific issues that include anxiety, depression, self-harming, substance/alcohol misuse, mental/physical health, etc. In doing this, we are able to gain an overall picture of the difficulties each person is experiencing and create a support plan tailored to their specific needs.

We monitor the progress of clients throughout their support and adjust their support plan if necessary. Finally, we ask all clients to complete an end of support questionnaire to compare where they were at the start of their support to the end. This determines our outcomes. For children/young people we also ask parents to complete a similar questionnaire, enabling us to compare the child's view of their progress against their parents'. This helps us to measure outcomes more accurately.

Our monitoring system is designed using guidance from the National Child Bereavement Network. This enables us to analyse information and provide statistical evidence about the impact of our work.

Outcomes

For adult service users

- **83%** felt that their support had helped them
- **75%** felt that there had been an improvement in their mental health
- **67%** had noticed an improvement in their physical health
- **50%** of service users receiving professional medical support felt that following counselling they did not require this continued support
- **48%** said that they felt more socially supported and less isolated
- **92%** of adults said that they would recommend us to others who are bereaved
- **84%** of adults said that the quality of our services was excellent or very good

For children and young people

100% felt that their social life issues had improved/were no longer a problem for them

92% felt that their behavioural issues had improved/were no longer a problem for them

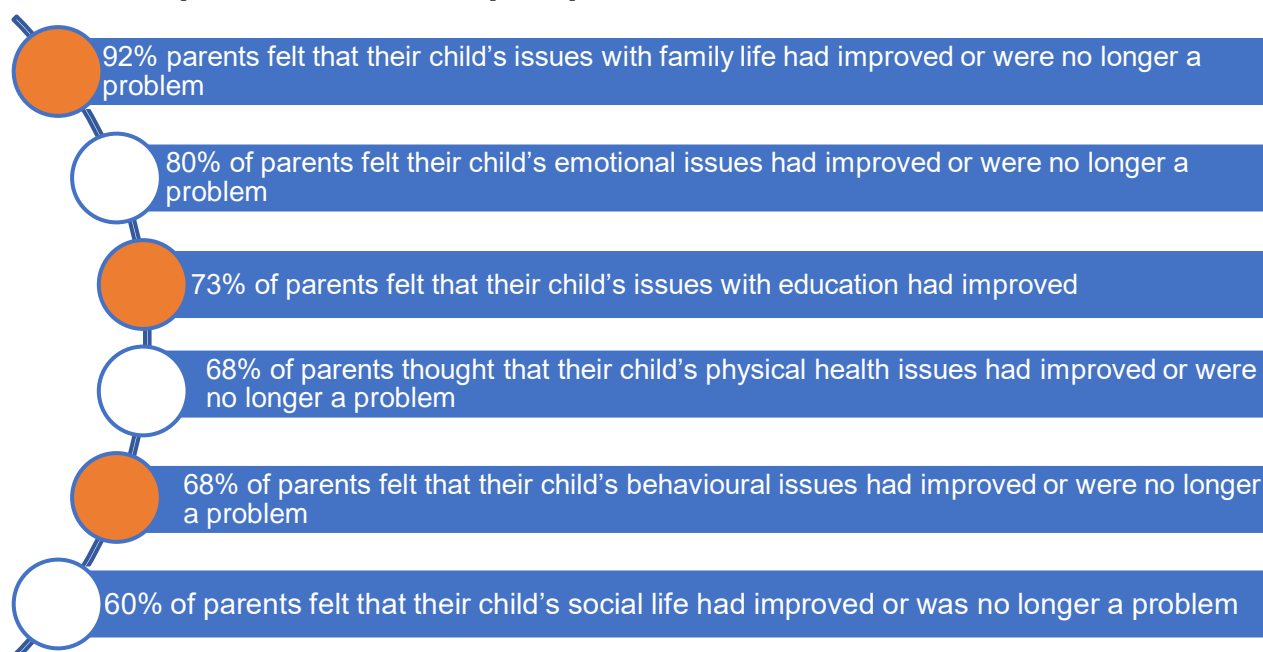
88% felt that their emotional symptoms had improved/were no longer an issue for them

84% felt that their physical issues had improved/were no longer a problem for them

82% felt that their family relationships had improved/were no longer a problem for them

70% felt that their education had improved/was no longer a problem for them

From the parents' / carers' perspective



Spotlight on our Volunteers

Our volunteers are our most vital asset. In 2020/21, they donated over 400 hours of their time to support the bereaved



Since WBSS started to provide placement opportunities it has trained 147 counsellors to help provide bereavement counselling.

Whenever possible, WBSS operates a rolling recruitment programme to attract volunteer counsellors to ensure that we have the staffing resources to provide a high skills base for us to draw from to support our clients. Over the years, we have developed a reputation for providing very good placements for those training to become counsellors and our volunteer mentoring is recognised as being excellent. This is evidenced in our retention rate of volunteers; we currently have 5 qualified counsellors who have been providing their services on a voluntary basis for between 10-15 years and 1 who has been with us for 18 years.

WBSS volunteers, providing support to adults, are all either qualified to at least Diploma Level 4 in Counselling or are training towards this qualification.

Prior to being able to provide support, all volunteers, regardless of qualification and/or experience, must complete our in-house 'Bereavement and Loss' 10-hour training programme. In addition, they must complete annual on-line safeguarding adults training.

Volunteers providing support to children and young people must be qualified to at least Diploma Level 4 in Counselling. In addition, they must also complete *THE SWING* 'Working with Children and Young People' 10-hour training programme as well as annual on-line safeguarding children training.

We recognise the importance of continually refreshing and expanding volunteer knowledge and experience and aim to offer additional training whenever opportunities arise.

Feedback from volunteers about how our training will help them with their future practice...

"It reassured my understanding of counselling skills. It's all in 'the context' it's about the client's needs. It encouraged me to celebrate with the clients their happy memories even though they are going through this difficult time in their life."

"Some very specific techniques for how to support people with their bereavement."

"Death changes everything. I realise I know more than I thought about bereavement. I realised that it isn't all sadness there will be lighter sides to working with the bereaved."

"Potential structure to sessions, how to work creatively with complex and complicated grief."

"I have learned something new from each session, there are so many different layers to grief that I hadn't previous knowledge of."

"I loved the fact that working with the bereaved can have a lot of positives that I didn't know about previously. I'm glad that we learned about the six ways of helping and we didn't focus on theories and models of bereavement because I can learn and research that outside of this course."

"The simple fact that everything changes after death and grief can manifest in so many different ways."

Notable Achievements during 2020-21

In addition to all the counselling support we have delivered we have also....

- Continued to provide support to children, young people and adults throughout the whole of the year despite COVID-19 lockdowns and local constraints.
- Received a total of 332 referrals requesting support.
- Purchased equipment to ensure that our centre was as safe as possible for staff, volunteers, and service users to return during COVID-19.
- Implemented a new staffing structure enabling us to provide additional support to service users and volunteers.
- Reviewed administrative and monitoring procedures and introduced new ways of working to improve efficiency.
- Overhauled and updated our website.
- Produced a leaflet and distributed it to 58 residential / care homes throughout the borough to offer support for staff affected by their work during the pandemic.
- Recruited and trained 14 new volunteers (to the date of this report) and provided them with 30 hours of bereavement training.
- Provided specific training to 5 volunteers to help them support children and young people
- Staff, trustees, and volunteers collectively completed 53 online safeguarding training sessions.
- Delivered internal webinars to 11 volunteers who requested training to assist them with providing counselling support by telephone.
- Delivered 3 'Supporting the bereaved' webinars which included 14 'Places of Welcome' coordinators who facilitate monthly groups at various Walsall locations.
- Delivered bereavement awareness training to staff at 2 local secondary schools to help them to recognise the signs of grieving and gain an awareness of when professional support should be sought.
- Continued to support the Dying Matters awareness campaign.
- Participated in The National Lottery #CommunitiesCan event.
- Completed One Walsall Development Tool which enabled us to internally assess how the charity is performing in 8 areas of development.
- Increased networking with local strategic groups. This included being part of the Walsall Multi-agency Suicide Prevention Strategy Group, Walsall Community Mental Health Partnership, Walsall Children and Young People Emotional Health and Wellbeing Strategy/Transformation group, and Walsall Mental Health Focus Group.
- Contributed to three workshops helping to develop a CCG Walsall Model of Participation and Engagement which will help shape services provide by Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.



Our Future Plans for 2021-22

During the next year, we will be writing a new 5-year business plan and fundraising strategy. These documents will present an overview of the activities and services of WBSS and explain how we plan to develop and fund our services over the coming years. The ongoing impact of COVID-19 will be taken into account within our plans.

- Recruit additional volunteers and train them to work with both adults and children.
- Recruit additional staff to help meet increased demand on our service.
- Develop a quarterly programme of Continual Professional Development training events for staff and volunteers.
- Deliver child bereavement training to our volunteers to enable them to support clients across the whole of the charity.
- Deliver bereavement awareness webinars to local support groups and agencies.
- Facilitate a programme of three weekly sessions to groups of students within school to help them to manage their emotions.
- Set up a befriending service for the elderly who are experiencing loneliness and isolation.
- Develop outreach support to vulnerable people including key workers in deprived communities to help them to cope with bereavement.
- Continue to deliver our bereaved by suicide support group and explore opportunities for setting up further groups for those dealing with other types of traumatic bereavement.
- Set up two drop-in support sessions, particularly targeting hard to reach groups.
- Consider the possibility of organising memorial services at local places of worship.
- Increase the profile of WBSS across the borough to ensure that the bereaved know where and how to contact us, should they need our support.
- Continue to network with key local groups and partnerships to seek opportunities of working together and improving support for the bereaved.
- Distribute our 'Reaching Communities' leaflet to GP surgeries and funeral directors to increase awareness about our services.
- Continue to promote the aims of the 'Dying Matters' coalition to encourage people to talk more openly about dying, death, and bereavement and to make plans for the end of life.
- Work with local funeral directors and bereavement staff at Walsall Hospital to build referral pathways for families and individuals in need of counselling support.
- Secure funding to continue to deliver all of our current charitable activities.
- Set up a fundraising committee of volunteers to help us to develop our fundraising income by building upon community support and goodwill and increasing our income generation from fundraising events and individual giving. We will also continue to seek support from charitable trusts and foundations and other potential sources of income including contractual work.

Financial Review

We do not charge our clients for our services to ensure that we are accessible to all. However, we do encourage donations if clients feel they are able to support our charity. We fund all of our services through voluntary donations and grants.

Despite being unable to progress with our community fundraising, our overall income has remained fairly consistent with the previous year, decreasing slightly from £169,996 (2019/20) to £168,021 (2020/21). Our expenditure has increased slightly rising from £157,927 (2019/20) to £158,673 (2020/21). This was mainly due to additional staff costs being incurred. The end reserves balance increased by £9,348 as a result of deferred income being released into the accounts.

Grants and donations from charitable giving organisations continue to be our primary source of income. In June 2020, our three-year grant from The Henry Smith Charity towards the costs of running *THE SWING* came to an end. Fortunately, we were able to reapply for continuation funding and were awarded a further three-year grant of £30,000 per year for the period 1st November 2020 to 31st October 2023. We are extremely grateful to The Henry Smith Charity for their continued support and to Children in Need, whose main grant also ended this year. However, we were awarded a small three-year grant of approximately £6,500 per year from Children in Need, to deliver a series of workshops to groups of students at various schools.

Our National Lottery Community Fund which supports the running of our adult bereavement support service '*Let's Talk*', is due to end in January 2022. We will shortly be preparing an initial proposal to The National Lottery to hopefully secure continuation funding for a further 3 years, which will include extending our support services further into communities across Walsall.

During this period, we secured £2,273 from the CAF Coronavirus Emergency Fund to purchase mobile telephones for staff to enable them to continue to support clients remotely. Additionally, we secured a grant for £36,194 from HM government and The National Lottery Coronavirus Community Fund, which enabled us to purchase safety equipment to make our centre COVID-19 secure and reopen for face-to-face support much more quicker.

At the time of writing this report, we have been fortunate to secure £27,500 (April 21) and a further £36,685 (July 21) from the Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust. This funding is for the charity as a whole to increase the number of support hours we provide. In addition to this, Walsall Council has committed to provide WBSS with a one-off grant of £60,000. The trustees feel that given the current waiting times, these two donations would be best used to employ additional staff on a temporary fixed term contract initially.

Moving forward, we are aware that we need to develop our income base, especially from community support and events. As a small charity, without a dedicated fundraiser, this does remain a challenge. However, we are considering options such as developing chargeable Continual Professional Development packages that can be delivered to other organisations to increase our income.

We are also aiming to set up a fundraising group, hopefully consisting of some past clients to organise fundraising events with some input and guidance from WBSS. Due to the continuing uncertainties around COVID-19, it is not possible to predict to what extent we will be able to develop this aspect of our income at this time.

Principal Funding Sources

The National Lottery Community Fund

This has been the charity's largest funder during 2020/21, with income totalling £52,456 to fund

the adult bereavement support service 'Let's Talk'.



The Henry Smith Charity

During this financial year, we entered our final year of a three-year grant from the Henry Smith Charity for £30,000 per annum. This grant was for *THE SWING*. We reapplied for a further three-year funding for this project in February 2020 and were informed in August 2020 that our application had been successful. We were awarded a further grant of £90,000 to be spread over the next 3 years.

BBC Children in Need

We received £14,712 for *THE SWING* from our three-year BBC Children in Need Main Grant and £4,047 from its Small Grants Programme. We reapplied to their Small Grants programme and were awarded £19,490 over three-years, to deliver a structured three-week therapeutic support programme within schools. We have also reapplied to Children in Need Main Grant programme for three-year funding for salary and associated costs of *THE SWING* Coordinator. A decision on the outcome of our application is expected towards the end of 2021.

Other notable grants

We are grateful for the continued support for *THE SWING* from repeat funders that include The Eveson Trust and The Grantham Yorke Trust, who both donated £5,000. We also received donations of £2,000 from The Souter Charitable Trust, Albert Hunt Foundation, The Saintbury Trust, William Cadbury, and The Roger and Douglas Turner Trust.

The Heart of England Community Foundation Coronavirus Resilience Fund donated £6,000 and The Toy Trust donated £2,597. Both of these grants were awarded for the purchase of resources and materials to support bereaved children and young people.

Community Fundraising and gifts in kind

As a result of the pandemic, community fundraising was drastically reduced this year. However, we are extremely grateful to the people of Walsall who helped us to raise £2,275. We received £432 in donations from clients, £300 from our local Asda, and £150 from St Lawrence church. A further £735 was raised from TSB Walsall and £776 through various fundraising activities by The Crossing at St Paul's. We would like to thank everyone who donated either their time or money to help support us. In addition, £764 was donated through JustGiving and PayPal.

Reserves Policy

The Trustees continue to review the charity's requirements for reserves considering the main risk to the organisation, that funding to run the organisation is not secure. The trustees have established a policy whereby the reserves in total that are not invested in tangible fixed assets held by the charity, should be up to the equivalent of 6 months of the total anticipated expenditure of the charity.

The level of these reserves has been determined by the need to meet the working capital requirements of the charity. This period represents the necessary amount of time required to deliver counselling sessions to all the clients who are on our waiting list for support and for the charity to carry out all its legal obligations.

At the end of March 2021, the total of the charity's reserves stood at £120,259 of which £49,013 was unrestricted and £71,246 restricted. Expenditure last year was £158,673, however this will increase during the next financial period due to increasing the number of staff. Therefore, the unrestricted free reserves represent 25.3% of our estimated expenditure of £193,764 for 2021/22. This will therefore be equivalent to approximately 3.04 months of the charity's running costs.

The financial strategy of WBSS continues to be that of building unrestricted reserves to meet our 6-month target, through planned cost-effective operational procedures and further fundraising. The Trustees will continue to take all necessary actions regarding the prevailing economic climate.

Risk Assessment

The Trustees are very aware of the need to assess and minimise risks to the operation of the charity. As such, a comprehensive set of policies and procedures are maintained, reviewed, and where necessary, updated to comply with changes in legislation and the requirements of funding bodies. Following the guidance of these policies covers the main risks to the operation of the charity.

The risk of being unable to adequately fund projects is our main concern. In order to minimise this risk, the trustees hope to diversify income streams. Expenditure is constantly reviewed in order to ensure that funds continue to be used effectively

The risk of not supporting clients and volunteers professionally is managed by having a supervision programme in place in line with the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) procedures. It is WBSS's policy that every new volunteer is supported by way of an obligatory training course followed by induction, prior to client contact time. Staff meetings, project meetings, and individual meetings are conducted monthly, and the board of trustees meet at least bi-monthly to review, amend and update working procedures and to eliminate risks. These meetings are held more frequently if required. Disclosure and Barring checks are made every three years for all members of staff, trustees, and potential new volunteers.

General Data Protection Regulation is adhered to as well as Vulnerable Adults and Child Protection policies regarding all work with children and families. Procedures are in place to ensure compliance with Health and Safety of all staff, volunteers, clients, and visitors to the centre. These ensure a consistent quality of delivery for all operational aspects of the charity. In addition, the regular meetings of the Trustees at the charity's premises facilitate the constant review of the environment in which the charity exists.

COVID-19

As a result of a national lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the charity closed its offices on Monday 23rd March 2020 and the Trustees implemented a work from home policy for staff and volunteers. The charity did not furlough any staff to ensure that bereaved clients could continue to be offered support. Trustees conducted monthly meetings via Zoom and regular meetings were held by the staff, also via Zoom, to offer guidance and support to each other.

All face-to-face counselling sessions were suspended and replaced with telephone support. Staff returned to working in the office on a rota basis from August 2020 and our centre re-opened for face-to-face support from September 2020.

The grant of £2,428 received from The CAF COVID Fund allowed us to purchase a laptop and printer to enable the Head of Service to work from home. In addition, we were also able to purchase mobile telephones for all staff to ensure support of clients could continue as cost effectively as possible. Previously, mobile phones were pay as you go.

In August 2020, WBSS also had confirmation that the charity would receive £36,194 from The National Lottery COVID Response Fund, to set up our Community Response Project. This project was to enable the charity to deliver outreach counselling support across Walsall in targeted communities. Unfortunately, due to continuing lockdown restrictions and venues being unable to hire rooms, we were unable to reach out into the community in the way that we had planned. However, this is still a project we plan to deliver because we want our services to be more accessible to those who cannot afford to travel into Walsall town centre or those who are fearful of travelling due to the pandemic. This grant also enabled us to purchase PPE equipment including an infrared thermometer, protective screens, hand sanitiser machines etc. and facilitated the safe reopening of our centre and the safe recommencement of face-to-face counselling support.

Structure, Governance and Management

Governing Document

Walsall Bereavement Support Service is a registered charity that aims to meet some of the needs of bereaved people within the Walsall Borough. The charity, originally formed as an unincorporated charity in 1998, became a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) on 4th July 2013 and is governed by a constitution approved by the Charity Commission of England and Wales.

Appointment of Trustees, Induction, and Training

The focus of the charity is that of supporting bereaved adults, young people and children. The Board of Trustees seeks to ensure that the needs of these groups are appropriately reflected through the diversity of the trustee body. To enhance the potential pool of trustees the charity has sought to identify members of the community who are willing to use their own experiences to assist the organisation.

The Board of Trustees is well represented by a wide range of individuals from various aspects of the community. Trustees have the power to appoint additional trustees to act jointly with them for all purposes. A trustee whose term of office has expired can be appointed for a further term of office.

Whilst there is no formal induction process in place, all new trustees are invited and encouraged to visit the offices of WBSS in order to familiarise themselves with the organisation and the context within which it operates. The Head of Service will then discuss the following aspects of the organisation with the new trustee and answer any questions arising.

- The obligations of the Board of Trustees members.
- The main documents which set out the operational framework for the charity.
- The current financial position as set out in the latest published accounts.
- Future and objectives of the organisation.

In addition to the above, a copy of the latest Annual Report is given to all new trustees along with a trustee role description, a copy of the constitution, the Charity Commission's Trustee Handbook, the organisation's main policy documents and the latest financial statements.

Organisational Structure

WBSS has a Board of Trustees of at least 5 members who meet at least quarterly and are responsible for the strategic direction and policy of the charity. At present there are 6 trustees from a variety of professional backgrounds relevant to the work of the charity.

The Head of Service is responsible for overseeing and maintaining the day-to-day operational management of the organisation in line with the constitution and quality procedures. They are required to attend trustees meeting but has no voting rights.

Responsibilities of the Trustees

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice). The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period.

In preparing these financial statements the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charity's SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charity (Accounts Reports) Regulations 2008. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Approved by the Trustees and signed on its behalf on 19th October 2021
by **Jim Green (Chair)**

Reference and Administrative Information

Charity Name: Walsall Bereavement Support Service

Charity Status: Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Charity Number: 1152724

Registered Office: Office Suite 2
The Crossing at St Paul's
Darwall Street
Walsall
West Midlands
WS1 1DA

Telephone: 01922 724841 / 01922 645035

Website: www.wbss.org.uk

Trustees:

Chair: James Green
Treasurer: Neil Simpson
Trustees: Dr Robert Crundwell
Bev Simpson
Alyson Green
Elaine Bullen (stepped down 13 May 2021)
Verity Baker (appointed 11 March 2021)

Employees:

Head of Service Rhiannon Brown (until Nov 2020) Dip.Couns. Registered Member BACP
Bev Richardson (from Nov 2020) Dip.Couns. Registered Member BACP

Finance Manager Bev Richardson MAAT

THE SWING Co-ordinator Sally Robinson Dip.Couns. Registered Member BACP

THE SWING Counsellors Amanda Holtham Dip.Couns. Registered Member BACP
Bev Richardson (until Jan 2021) Dip.Couns. Registered Member BACP

'Let's Talk' Co-ordinator Ian Davies (from Oct 2020) Dip.Couns. Registered Member BACP

'Let's Talk' Administrator - Claire Hastings (until Apr 2021)
Nikki Preene (from Apr 2021)

Independent Examiner:

Karen Hanlan
Karen Hanlan Independent Examiner Limited
12 Waterloo Close
Wellesbourne
Warwickshire
CV35 9JG

Banks:

Barclays Bank
1 Breadmarket Street
Lichfield
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Nationwide
18 Bridge Street
Walsall
West Midlands
WS1 1DE

Acknowledgements

Walsall Bereavement Support Service would like to publicly acknowledge and thank the following organisations and donors for their financial support during 2020/2021.

- Baron Davenport's Charity
- BBC Children in Need
- CB & HH Taylor 1984 Trust
- Charities Aid Foundation Coronavirus
- Edward & Dorothy Cadbury Trust
- Heart of England Community Foundation Coronavirus Resilience Fund
- HM Government & The National Lottery Community Fund Coronavirus
- Matthews Wrightson Charity Trust
- National Education Union (Walsall)
- The Albert Hunt Trust
- The Cole Charitable Trust
- The Eveson Charitable Trust
- The Geoff Hill Charitable Trust
- The Grantham Yorke Trust
- The Henry Smith Charity
- The National Lottery Community Fund
- The Roger & Douglas Turner Charitable Trust
- The Saintbury Trust
- The Souter Charitable Trust
- The Toy Trust
- The WED Charitable Trust
- The William A Cadbury Charitable Trust

We would also like to thank the following organisations for fundraising on behalf of Walsall Bereavement Support Service during 2020/2021

- Asda Walsall
- St Lawrence Church
- St Mark's Parish Church
- The Crossing at St Paul's
- TSB Walsall

And finally... many thanks go to all of the volunteers for the skills, commitment, and time that they have contributed throughout the year. Without their support we simply would not be able to provide this valuable service.

Independent Examiners Reported to the trustees of Walsall Support Service

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Walsall Bereavement Support Service ('the Charity') for the year ended 31 March 2021 which are set out on pages 23 to 33.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I can confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- 1) accounting records were not kept in respect of the Charity as required by section 130 of the 2011 Act; or
- 2) the accounts do not accord with those records; or
- 3) the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Karen Hanlan, Institute of Chartered Accountants England & Wales

Date

Karen Hanlan, Independent Examiner Limited

19th October 2021

12 Waterloo Close, Wellesbourne CV35 9JG

Statement of Financial Activities

		Un-restricted funds 2021	Restricted funds 2021	Total funds 2021	Total funds 2020
	Note	£	£	£	£
Income from:					
Donations & legacies	1	1,180	53,247	54,427	77,911
Charitable activities	2	1,325	109,682	111,007	88,291
Trading activities	3	2,275	-	2,275	3,212
Investments – bank interest		312	-	312	582
Total income		5,092	162,929	168,021	169,996
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds		-	12,822	12,822	13,007
Charitable activities		-	145,851	145,851	144,920
Total expenditure	4	-	158,673	158,673	157,927
Net income and net movement in funds for year		5,092	4,256	9,348	12,069
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward		41,433	69,478	110,911	98,842
Transfers between funds		2,488	-2,488	-	-
Total funds carried forward		49,013	71,246	120,259	110,911

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

Balance Sheet

	Note	2021 £	2020 £
FIXED ASSETS			
Tangible assets	7	<u>3,770</u>	<u>2,718</u>
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors	8	1,609	1,549
Cash at Bank		<u>132,633</u>	<u>131,683</u>
		<u>134,242</u>	<u>133,232</u>
CREDITORS			
Amounts falling due within one year	9	(17,753)	(25,039)
		<u>116,489</u>	<u>108,193</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS			
		<u>116,489</u>	<u>108,193</u>
NET ASSETS		<u>120,259</u>	<u>110,911</u>
FUNDS	11		
Restricted Funds		71,246	69,478
Unrestricted Funds		49,013	41,433
		<u>120,259</u>	<u>110,911</u>
TOTAL FUNDS		<u>120,259</u>	<u>110,911</u>

The accompanying accounting policies and notes form part of these financial statements.

Approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by:

Mr J Green, Chair of Trustees

Date: 19th October 2021

Principle Accounting Policies

Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) (updated 1 January 2019) – (Charities SORP (FRS102)) and the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102).

Walsall Bereavement Support Service meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note.

Going Concern statement

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis which assumes that the Charity will continue to operate. The validity of this assumption is dependent upon the continuance of support from the Charity's key funders and stakeholders and in response to the progress made by the Charity in pursuing a viable budget including the obtaining of further grants and donations.

The Charity's business plan shows that the Charity will be able to operate in the foreseeable future. Based on this understanding the Trustees believe that it remains appropriate to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis. The financial statements do not include any adjustments, which would result from the basis of preparation being inappropriate.

Funds

General accumulated funds are unrestricted funds available for general purposes and include funds designated for a particular purpose; the use of such funds remains at the discretion of the Trustees.

Restricted funds are funds subject to conditions imposed by the donor or by specific terms of the appeal under which the funds are raised. The restrictive conditions are binding upon the Charity.

Income

All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities when the Charity is legally entitled, ultimate receipt is probable and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy.

Income relating to future periods, as a result of donor-imposed conditions specifying the time period, has been treated as deferred income.

Income dependent on certain conditions, amounting to more than mere administrative requirements, is recognised when the conditions have been fulfilled.

Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the Charity to the expenditure. All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis. Expenditure is classified under the following activity headings:

Costs of raising funds comprises the costs of fundraising activity and includes an allocation of staff costs relating to time spent on fundraising activity.

Expenditure on charitable expenditure includes the costs of project delivery to further the purposes of the Charity and their associated support and governance costs.

Principle Accounting Policies (continued)

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

Interest receivable

Bank interest is shown on the basis of amounts received in the year.

Tangible fixed assets

Depreciation is provided at a rate calculated to write off the cost on a straight-line basis over a period of less than the estimated useful life of the assets, which is estimated at 4 years.

Fixed assets are capitalised when their value exceeds £500.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash at bank and in hand and short-term deposits repayable on or within a three-month notice period.

Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

Creditors

Creditors are recognised where the Charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably.

Pensions

The Charity contributes to employee's individual personal pension plans. The employer contributions to the scheme in 2021 were £2,349 (2020 £2,469) and are charged to the statement of financial activities as incurred.

Taxation

As a registered Charity no provision is considered necessary for taxation.

Notes to the Financial Statements

1. Donations & legacies

	2021 £	2020 £
Un-restricted:		
Donations	730	4,111
Grants	450	1,500
	<u>1,180</u>	<u>5,611</u>
Restricted:		
Donations	-	250
Grants		
The Henry Smith Charity (The Swing)	20,000	30,000
Other Charitable Trusts (The Swing)	33,247	42,050
Other Charitable Trusts (Hope Group)	-	-
	<u>53,247</u>	<u>72,300</u>
Total	<u>54,427</u>	<u>77,911</u>

2. Income from Charitable Activities

	2021 £	2020 £
Un-restricted:		
Training & Support	1,325	1,125
	<u>1,325</u>	<u>1,125</u>
Restricted:		
The National Lottery (Let's Talk)	52,456	52,436
Children in Need small grant (The Swing)	4,047	9,665
Children in Need main grant (The Swing)	14,712	25,065
CAF Coronavirus Emergency Fund	2,273	-
HM Government & The National Lottery	36,194	-
Coronavirus Community Support Fund	-	-
	<u>109,682</u>	<u>87,166</u>
Total	<u>111,007</u>	<u>88,291</u>

3. Trading activities

	2021 £	2020 £
Un-restricted:		
Fundraising events	2,275	2,294
Restricted:		
Fundraising (The Swing)	-	78
Fundraising (HOPE Group)	-	840
	<u>-</u>	<u>918</u>
Total	<u>2,275</u>	<u>3,212</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

4. Analysis of Expenditure

	Unrestricted	Restricted	2021	2020
	£	£	£	£
Staff Costs	-	112,137	112,137	112,528
Fundraising Costs	-	11,105	11,105	8,876
Centre Rent	-	7,800	7,800	11,650
Unit 3 Rent	-	1,897	1,897	-
Room Hire	-	45	45	705
Utilities	-	774	774	-
IT	-	1,881	1,881	1,175
Telephone	-	975	975	494
Stationery	-	162	162	134
Postage	-	1,095	1,095	1,017
Printing	-	898	898	753
Office Equipment	-	1,878	1,878	413
Refreshments	-	3	3	100
Materials	-	637	637	145
Resources	-	251	251	297
Travel / Parking	-	142	142	1,143
Training	-	1,574	1,574	2,369
Supervision	-	4,913	4,913	4,600
Assessment	-	975	975	1,440
Client Support	-	120	120	75
Volunteers	-	-	-	-
Publicity	-	1,206	1,206	852
Insurance	-	2,010	2,010	1,941
DBS Checks	-	452	452	366
Legal & professional Fees	-	1,508	1,508	1,276
Bank Charges	-	100	100	190
Covid-19 PPE	-	2,547	2,547	-
Sundries	-	283	283	4,672
Depreciation	-	1,305	1,305	716
	-	158,673	158,673	157,927

Resources Expended

	Unrestricted	Restricted	2021	2020
	£	£	£	£
Fundraising Costs	-	12,822	12,822	13,007
Direct Costs	-	105,858	105,858	99,455
Support Costs	-	37,789	37,789	41,122
Governance	-	2,204	2,204	4,343
	-	158,673	158,673	157,927

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

5. Net expenditure/income for year

Net income is stated after charging:	2021	2020
	£	£
Independent Examiners fee	890	890
Depreciation	1,305	716
	2,195	1,606

6. Staff costs, trustee remuneration and expenses

	2021	2020
	£	£
Salaries	105,435	103,604
National Insurance	4,353	5,494
Pensions	2,349	2,469
Total	112,137	111,567

No employee has employee benefits in excess of £60,000 (2020: nil).

The equivalent of 3.82 full-time members of staff were employed during the year (2020: 3.93)

Key management personnel comprise the Head of Service and the Finance Manager whose employee benefits total £39,779 (2020 £46,468).

The charity does not operate its own pension scheme but contributes towards NEST Pension scheme for all employees.

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits in the year (2020: None). No trustee expenses were reimbursed in the year (2020: None).

There are no further related party transactions that require disclosure in the accounts

7. Tangible fixed assets

	Computer Equipment £	Fixtures & Fittings £	Total £
Cost			
At beginning of year	16,049	2,182	18,231
Additions	2,357	-	2,357
At end of year	18,406	2,182	20,588
Depreciation			
At beginning of year	13,331	2,182	15,513
Charge for the year	1,305	-	1,305
At end of year	14,636	2,182	16,818
Net Book Value			
At 31 March 2020	2,718	-	2,718
At 31 March 2021	3,770	-	3,770

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

8. Debtors

	2021	2020
	£	£
Prepayments	1,109	1,049
Rental Deposit	500	500
	<u>1,609</u>	<u>1,549</u>

9. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2021	2020
	£	£
Accruals	1,581	890
Deferred income	16,172	24,149
	<u>17,753</u>	<u>25,039</u>

Movements in deferred income are as follows:

	£
At beginning of year	24,149
Released to income in year	(24,149)
Deferred in year	(16,172)
At end of year	<u>16,172</u>

Deferred income relates to funding received in advance of project activity.

10. Analysis of net assets between funds

Fund balances at 31 March 2021 are represented by:

	Un-restricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds
	£	£	£
Fixed Assets	3,770	-	3,770
Current assets	45,243	88,999	134,242
Current Liabilities	-	(17,753)	(17,753)
Total	49,013	71,246	120,259

Fund balances at 31 March 2020 were represented by:

	Un-restricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds
	£	£	£
Fixed Assets	-	2,718	2,718
Current assets	41,433	91,799	133,232
Current Liabilities	-	(25,039)	(25,039)
Total	41,433	69,478	110,911

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

11. Movement in funds

	Balance at beginning of year £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers between funds £	Balance at end of year £
Restricted funds					
The National Lottery	7,443	52,456	(44,799)	-	15,100
Let's Talk	250	-	-	-	250
The Swing	49,324	30,650	(29,383)	-	50,591
The Henry Smith Charity	-	20,000	(20,000)	-	-
BBC Children in Need – small grant	746	4,047	(4,793)	-	-
BBC Children in Need – main grant	769	14,712	(15,481)	-	-
Grantham Yorke	388	-	-	-	388
St James's Place	7,316	-	(7,316)	-	-
HOPE Group	3,242	-	(45)	-	3,197
The Toy Trust	-	2,597	(877)	-	1,720
CAF Coronavirus Emergency Fund	-	2,273	(1,801)	(472)	-
HR Government & The National Lottery Coronavirus Community Fund	-	36,194	(34,178)	(2,016)	-
	69,478	162,929	(158,673)	(2,488)	71,246
Un-restricted funds					
General fund	41,433	5,092	-	2,488	49,013
Total funds	110,911	168,021	(158,673)	-	120,259

Transfers between funds relates to expenditure on capital items funded by a grant.

The National Lottery Community Fund is the final year 3 of a three-year grant. This enabled us to provide support to bereaved adults under the project name of Let's Talk.

The Swing provides counselling support to children, young people and families. Funding is provided by various charitable giving organisations and grant providers.

The Henry Smith Charity is year 1 of a new three-year grant towards The Swing project.

Both BBC Children In Need grants ended during this year, they were part of a three- year grants towards salary costs associated with The Swing.

St James's Place provides funding for a third counsellor working with The Swing.

Grantham Yorke provided funding for sessional workers to support bereaved children and young people as and when required.

HOPE Group (formally the Bereaved by Suicide Support Group) provides monthly support to the families who have lost loved ones as a result of suicide.

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

The CAF Coronavirus Emergency Fund enabled the charity to purchase electrical equipment to enable staff to work from home more efficiently.

The Coronavirus Community Support fund, funded by HM Government & The National Lottery Community Fund partnership enabled the charity to buy PPE and equipment to ensure the centre was covid secure as well as pay towards costs to increase the charity capacity and assist with core costs.

General funds consist of unrestricted reserves brought forward, general donations and fundraising; they may be used for any charitable purpose as deemed by the trustees.

2020 funds	Balance at beginning of year £	Income £	Expenditure £	Balance at end of year £
Restricted funds				
The National Lottery	5,084	52,436	(50,077)	7,443
Let's Talk	-	250	-	250
The Swing	48,001	32,128	(30,805)	49,324
The Henry Smith Charity	-	30,000	(30,000)	-
BBC Children in Need – small grant	653	9,665	(9,572)	746
BBC Children in Need – main grant	645	25,065	(24,941)	769
The Wesleyan Foundation	7,288	-	(7,288)	-
Grantham Yorke	463	-	(75)	388
St James's Place	-	10,000	(2,684)	7,316
Hope Group	2,600	840	(198)	3,242
	64,734	160,384	(155,640)	69,478
Un-restricted funds				
General fund	34,108	9,612	(2,287)	41,433
Total funds	98,842	169,996	(157,927)	110,911

12. Controlling Interest

The Charity is controlled by the Trustees.

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

13. Comparative Statement of Financial Activities

		Un-restricted funds 2020	Restricted funds 2020	Total funds 2020
	Note	£	£	£
Income from:				
Donations & legacies	1	5,611	72,300	77,911
Charitable activities	2	1,125	87,166	88,291
Trading activities	3	2,294	918	3,212
Investments – bank interest		582	-	582
Total income		9,612	160,384	169,996
Expenditure on:				
Raising funds		-	13,007	13,007
Charitable activities		2,287	142,633	144,920
Total expenditure	4	2,287	155,640	157,927
Net income and net movement in funds for year		7,325	4,744	12,069
Reconciliation of funds:				
Total funds brought forward		34,108	64,734	98,842
Total funds carried forward		41,433	69,478	110,911